

THOMPSON HOUSE (now Library)
ALBION ILLINOIS

Edwards Co.

HABS NO 25-2

HABS

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24-ALBI

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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings
PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
CENTRAL ILLINOIS DISTRICT NO 25

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
EDGAR E. LUNDEEN DISTRICT OFFICER
BLOOMINGTON ILLINOIS

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Dr. F. B. Thompson House, Albion, Edwards County, Illinois

by Ralph Varney, Champaign, Illinois, April 1934

Between 1818 and 1822 there was a concerted scheme of colonization that, running in channels completely different from those which carried the ordinary course of settlement, was to influence the development of the State out of all proportion to the numbers engaged in it. This enterprise was the settlement of English Prairie (later Albion) in Edwards County by Morris Birkbeck and George Flowers. At its inception the motive force in the movement was the discontent with economic and political conditions in England that affected men of the comparatively affluent classes. Morris Birkbeck - to use his own words, aspired to "leave his children citizens of a flourishing, public-spirited, energetic community, where the insolence of wealth, and the servility of pauperism, between which, in England, there is scarcely an interval remaining, are alike unknown."

In presenting their design of a colony to the English public by the publication of Birkbeck's letters, the promoters strove to induce men of their own social status—tenant farmers possessed of capital and desirous of becoming landholders—to take up land from them or in their vicinity. (Centennial History of Illinois, Vol II Pease pages 12-13)

Samuel Thompson, Sr., of London, England, apparently influenced by Birkbeck, purchased land in Albion, but never came to America to claim it. His two sons F. B. and Samuel Jr., however, came to America and took over the land belonging to their father.

F. B. Thompson, also a cousin of Baroness Burdette Coutts of England, became a practicing physician of Albion. He built his home in 1842, maintaining characteristics similar to many others of that time.

The Episcopal Church, having been established in Albion in 1818, fell into a decadent period. An intensive effort was made to re-establish the church and reference is made in the (Journal of Illinois State Historical Society, Vol II, 1918-19) as follows: "At a public meeting of the friends and members of the church held March 28, 1842, there were present the Rev. B. Hutchins, H. J. Hutchins, David Hearsom, F. B. Thompson, M.D. and Joel Churchhill."

The following recorded deeds indicate the line of ownership:

Richard Flower, George Flower, Charles Pugsley, Samuel Thompson, Henry Birkett and Daniel Orange, town proprietors of Albion to James Oliver, July 1st. 1822.

James Oliver and wife to Hugh Ronalds, Feb. 9, 1831

Hugh Renald and wife to George Wooll, Jan. 30, 1838

George Wooll and wife to Francis B. Thompson, April 18, 1840.

Francis B. Thompson and wife to Samuel L. Wheeler, June 5, 1903.

Samuel L. Wheeler and wife to George Spiller, July 1, 1908.

George G. Spiller and wife to Frank D. Mayes, Trustee for Albion Library Association, March 20, 1922

Frank D. Mayes, Trustee for Albion Library Association to City of Albion, September 3, 1923.

Reference: Carl T. Pieroe, Clerk of the Circuit Court
and ex-officio Recorder of Edwards County.

The house is now occupied by the Albion Public Library. The north wing and south and east porches were probably added at some early date to the original building. The front porch was added in 1928.

The construction and detail of the Thompson house is similar to the French house next door and to several others, indicating that this material must have been imported from a common source. No record has been found relative to an architect or builders.

Reference: "History of the English Settlement in
Edwards County" by George Flowers, pgs.
321-322

Ralph W. Varney

(Approved)

Wm. E. Lundeen

Reviewed 1936 by H.C.F.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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